

And I accept your letter, and I wish you and Gretchen all the very best.

Ambassador Bolton. Many thanks.

The President. Thank you. Thanks for serving.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:49 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gretchen Bolton, wife of Ambassador Bolton. The Office of the Press Secretary also made available Ambassador Bolton's letter of resignation.

Statement on the Resignation of John R. Bolton as United States
Permanent Representative to the United Nations
December 4, 2006

It is with deep regret that I accept John Bolton's decision to end his service in the administration as Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations when his commission expires.

Over a year ago, I appointed Ambassador Bolton because I knew he would represent America's values and effectively confront difficult problems at the United Nations. He served his country with extraordinary dedication and skill, assembling coalitions that addressed some of the most consequential issues facing the international community. During his tenure, he articulately advocated the positions and values of the United States and advanced the expansion of democracy and liberty.

Ambassador Bolton led the successful negotiations that resulted in unanimous Security Council resolutions regarding North Korea's military and nuclear activities. He built consensus among our allies on the need for Iran to suspend the enrichment and reprocessing of uranium. His efforts to promote the cause of peace in Darfur resulted in a peacekeeping commitment by the United Nations. He made the case for

United Nations reform because he cares about the institution and wants it to become more credible and effective.

I am deeply disappointed that a handful of United States Senators prevented Ambassador Bolton from receiving the up-or-down vote he deserved in the Senate. They chose to obstruct his confirmation, even though he enjoys majority support in the Senate and even though their tactics will disrupt our diplomatic work at a sensitive and important time. This stubborn obstructionism ill serves our country and discourages men and women of talent from serving their Nation.

I thank John Bolton for the dedication and skill with which he performed his duties, and his wife, Gretchen, and daughter, Jennifer Sarah, for their support as Ambassador Bolton served his country. All Americans owe John Bolton their gratitude for a job well done.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also made available Ambassador Bolton's letter of resignation.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Secretary of Defense-Designate Robert M. Gates

December 5, 2006

The President. Good morning. I just had a breakfast with my nominee to be the Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates. Bob Gates will be a fine Secretary of Defense. I appreciate the fact that he's getting a hearing today in the United States Senate. I hope for a speedy confirmation so he can get sworn in and get to work.

Those who wear the uniform know they'll have a friend in Bob Gates in the Defense Department. He admires our military; he respects those who have volunteered to serve our country. He's going to do an excellent job for us.

Again, Bob, I thank you for agreeing to serve.

Secretary-designate Gates. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

The President. Best of luck up there on Capitol Hill. Good luck to you.

Secretary-designate Gates. Thank you.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:48 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Iraq Study Group

December 6, 2006

I just received the Iraq Study Group report, prepared by a distinguished panel of our fellow citizens. I want to thank James Baker and Lee Hamilton and the panel members for spending a lot of time on this really difficult issue. And I thank you for coming into the White House today to give me a copy of this report.

I've told the members that this report, called "The Way Forward," will be taken very seriously by this administration. This report gives a very tough assessment of the situation in Iraq. It is a report that brings some really very interesting proposals, and we will take every proposal seriously, and we will act in a timely fashion.

The commission is headed up to Congress, and I urge the Members of Congress to take this report seriously. While they won't agree with every proposal—and we probably won't agree with every proposal—it, nevertheless, is an opportunity to come

together and to work together on this important issue.

The country, in my judgment, is tired of pure political bickering that happens in Washington, and they understand that on this important issue of war and peace, it is best for our country to work together. And I understand how difficult that is, but this report will give us all an opportunity to find common ground, for the good of the country, not for the good of the Republican Party or the Democrat Party, but for the good of the country.

We can achieve long-lasting peace for this country, and it requires tough work. It also requires a strategy that will be effective. And we've got men and women of both political parties around this table who spent a lot of time thinking about the way forward in Iraq and the way forward in the Middle East, and I can't thank them enough for your time. You could be doing a lot of other things. You could have had